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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2009

In Today's Papers

The Turkey-U.S.-Iraq Summit (Cumhuriyet)
Media outlets report the third ministerial meeting of the tripartite mechanism formed by Turkey, Iraq and the United States to develop their cooperation in the fight against the PKK terrorist organization was held in Ankara yesterday. The Turkish delegation was headed by Interior Minister Besir Atalay, the Iraqi delegation by Iraq's National Security Minister Sharwan al-Wa'ili, and the U.S. delegation by U.S. Brigadier General Steven Hummer, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations in Iraq's Multinational Force(MNF-I). Newspapers cover the meetings very positively and hail the meeting as "a summit" between Turkey, the U.S. and Iraq that will "liquidate the PKK." Conservative-nationalist Turkiye headlines, "Turkey, Iraq And The U.S. Will Liquidate the PKK," and the paper reports, "The Wipe-Out (of the PKK) Has Begun." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak notes, "The three-party meeting held in Ankara targeted ways to destroy PKK leadership in Kandil and Makhmur."

Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports Turkey asked for enhanced security measures around the PKK camps in Kandil, and that the work on Makhmur Camp was "detailed and updated." Mainstream Hurriyet notes, "The most important decision reached yesterday related to Makhmur refugee camp," as "Intelligence gathered in Makhmur will be submitted to Turkey." Mainstream Sabah notes it was decided that "logistical support for PKK members in Makhmur camp should be cut, and camp members linked to the PKK terror organization should be given no freedom of movement." Sabah also says Turkey agreed at the talks to give intelligence training to Iraqi officials, thus making Iraq a part of the intelligence sharing mechanism between the U.S. and Turkey. Cumhuriyet reports, "Baghdad expressed concern over claims the U.S. and Turkey met in Istanbul with Iraqi groups who are considered terrorists by the Baghdad administration." However, Sabah says that the issue was not discussed during the meeting and instead the Iraqi minister conveyed his anxiety to Turkish Interior Minister Atalay in a separate meeting.

Interior Minister Atalay told a press conference following the meetings that the parties "agreed to advance anti-terror cooperation" in order to end PKK presence in Iraq. "We discussed

the fate of PKK camps in northern Iraq and we want to see concrete results in the fight against the PKK," said Atalay. Atalay said that the three-party subcommittee would continue holding weekly meetings in Baghdad, and added the sharing of intelligence via the Turkish office in Erbil continued. The Iraqi Interior Minister al-Waili said they were working on the list of the PKK leaders Turkey wants to be extradited. Waili noted the meetings in Ankara were "successful and positive," report papers

Turkish Government to Announce its 'Kurdish Initiative' Wednesday
Vatan reports "The government will initiate a plan, which is publicly called "The Kurdish Initiative," today. All media report Interior Minister Besir Atalay will hold a press conference at 12:30 p.m. at the ministry and make important statements about the plan. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports the government intends to resettle PKK militants settled in Makhmur Camp in northern Iraq if the organization agrees to lay down its arms. Papers expect the "steps to be taken" to include the closing of the Makhmur Camp, the return of the PKK militants to their homes, the sending of the PKK leaders to third countries, social policies targeting southeast Turkey, and legal arrangements for children convicted of throwing stones at the police. Liberal Radikal headlines, "Initiative Excitement," as "NGOs are excited at the prospect of increasing democratic standards."
Editorials on Turkey's Kurdish Question

Bejan Matur wrote in Islamist oriented Zaman: "There is an obvious change in rhetoric coming from both the state and from Kurdish groups. Once the state indicated it would change its position and pursue a new approach on Kurdish issue, the Kurdish political actors

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also changed accordingly."

Rusen Cakir wrote in mainstream Vatan: "The Kurdish initiative affects both regional and international spheres, by the nature of problem. However, it does not necessarily mean foreign pressure was exerted upon Turkey in order to reach a solution, as some conspiracy theorists tend to believe. On the contrary, this is our matter and we must resolve this issue ourselves. As president Gul suggested, the best way to address the problem is to raise Turkey's democratic standards."

Murat Yetkin wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "Had Turkey been able to resolve its Kurdish problem long ago, today's Turkey would be closer to achieving its goal of a becoming a democratic and secular state based on the rule of law. Turkey would be much more advanced regarding human rights and economic welfare as well. At this stage, there is still a significant window of opportunity in which to solve the problem. This chance must be supported by everyone."

Tufan Turenc wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "It is possible to resolve the Kurdish issue because the Turks and Kurds of this country have not produced any animosity after 25 years of violence. The solution finding process is something upon which everyone agrees. In order to initiate concrete results, terror must come to a clear end. The rest will be easy."

Sargsyan: "I will not come to Turkey for the football match if the border remains closed."

All media outlets report Armenian President Sargsyan told a press conference in Yerevan Tuesday that he will not attend the "Football Diplomacy" match between Turkey and Armenia in Istanbul in October if the border between Turkey and Armenia remains closed at that time. The Armenian president emphasized during a joint press conference with Serbian President Tadic, "I will only accept the invitation if the agreements are observed and visible steps are taken, that is, I will go to Turkey if the border is open or if we are on the threshold of Armenia's de-blockading." In addition, he noted, "Little time is left until the return match of the national football teams of Armenia and Turkey, which I have been invited to attend by the President of Turkey Abdullah Gul. In the existing circumstances we, certainly, anticipate to witness in the nearest future some constructive steps, through which our partners will try to create a corresponding environment for the reciprocal visit of

the President of Armenia."

Zana Convicted to 15 Months for Making 'Terror Propaganda'

Papers and television channels report the internationally renowned Kurdish politician and activist Leyla Zana has been sentenced to 15 months in prison for delivering a speech in London last year, in which she allegedly made "terror propaganda." The judges sentenced Zana to 16 months of imprisonment according to Article 7/2 of the Counter Terror Law for making propaganda of a terrorist organization but lowered the sentence to 15 months due to good conduct at court. In May 2008, Zana addressed the SOAS University in London, saying, "The PKK and Abdullah Ocalan are the hearts and minds of the Kurdish people." Zana's lawyers told the court Zana's conviction would not help the efforts to find a solution to Turkey's Kurdish question, reports leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet.

Hizb-ut Tahrir Planned to Attack The Virgin Mary's House in Turkey (Vatan)

Mainstream Vatan reports the fundamentalist terror organization Hizb-ut Tahrir was allegedly planning to stage attacks on the house of Virgin Mary in Ephesus near the city of Izmir in western Turkey. Last week, police apprehended 165 members of the terrorist organization in operations in 23 provinces around Turkey. Eight suspects were detained in the eastern province of Van, and police found plans of the house of the Virgin Mary in the suspects' "cell house." Police have also seized documents proving links between Hizb-ut Tahrir and the shadowy 'Ergenekon' organization, says Vatan.

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DTP's Tugluk Makes Self-Criticism re Kurdish Question

Papers report that Turkey's main Kurdish party DTP's Aysel Tugluk, Diyarbakir lawmaker from the party's 'moderate wing,' said that "messages coming from the top of the state" were the "last opportunity" for finding a solution to the Kurdish problem. "We should have stood against the killing of soldiers as well; we have not been able to establish empathy," said Tugluk, stressing the DTP, too, did not take "enough responsibility" in the efforts to find a solution. Tugluk added that politicians should "apologize" for being unable to stop the deaths, report papers.

Turkey to Open Embassies in 26 African Countries (Zaman)

Islamist-oriented Zaman reports that within the framework of outreach to Africa, Turkey will open embassies in 26 African countries. In the first stage, eight embassies will be built in the continent, which will also coordinate the aid sent to African countries by Turkish state agencies such as the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) and the Turkish Red Crescent (Kizilay) as well some Turkish NGOs, reports Zaman.

U.S. Softens Sanctions Against Syria (Milliyet)

Media are quite positive regarding the U.S. decision to relax sanctions against Syria, with some noting the step as Obama's reversal of the Bush-era sanctions, some hailing the gesture as a way to improve relations with the Middle East, and others noting the Obama administration is stepping up efforts to increase sanctions against Iran. Mainstream Milliyet says, "Obama has decided to relax the sanctions that were placed on Syria during the Bush administration," and the Bush administration "accused Syria of being a state supporter of terrorism." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "The Obama Administration, in an effort to improve relations in the Middle East, has decided to ease economic sanctions against Syria." Mainstream Haberturk calls the effort, "A Trade Gesture from The U.S. to Syria." In "Embargo Balance," Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak notes that the U.S. sanctions against Syria and Iran are no longer "balanced" between the two countries, "As the Obama Administration decides to relax sanctions against Syria, the subject of intensifying sanctions against Iran is on the agenda."

Gates' Surprise Visit Delivers a Warning

Media point out that U.S. Defense Secretary Gates made a surprise visit to Iraq yesterday in order to make a call for peace between the Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates paid a surprise visit to Iraq yesterday" and "made a call to Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds to reach an agreement by the time the U.S. withdraws at the end of

2011." Liberal Radikal notes, "Gates Warns Iraqi Kurds and Arabs," and the paper reports, "Gates warned of a potential for civil war over sharing oil resources and sharing Kirkuk if the groups fail to reach a compromise while U.S. forces are still in Iraq."

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- Turkey's High Board of Justices and Prosecutors (HSYK) said it was showing "utmost sensitivity" in ensuring the independence of the judiciary in the 'Ergenekon' lawsuit.
- Former Turkish Ambassador to Belgium, Fuat Tanlay has been named the foreign policy advisor of PM Erdogan.
- Turkey is convicted by the European Court of Human Rights for arresting a soldier charged with "separatist propaganda."
- The Turkish economy is expected to shrink by 5.2 percent this year, Turkey's leading business gathering TUSIAD says.
- 3G mobile phone service will be introduced in Turkey on July 30.

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World

- Armenia's President Serge Sargsyan said he will not travel to Turkey to watch a soccer game between Turkey and Armenia in Istanbul next year if the border between the two countries is not opened by then.
- The Minsk Group co-chair Matthew Bryza says the process of rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia has "slowed down."
- Iran authorities Tuesday released 140 people who had been arrested in the country's post-election unrest.
- Exiled Uighur leader Rebiya Kadeer arrives in Japan to talk with the Japanese government about the difficulties Uighurs are facing in China.
- A Christian member of the Uighur ethnic group went on trial in western China's Xinjiang region.

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